

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application, all of which have been amended. No new claims have been added.

The specification and Abstract have been amended to correct spelling, grammatical and idiomatic errors. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-4 and 8-11 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,043,431 to Kato (hereinafter "**Kato**").

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Kato discloses a positioning cylinder to close positioning holes in both the upper and lower casings of a branching junction box so as to prevent dirt and moisture from entering. The positioning cylinder is preferably integral with the upper casing and hollow so as to allow it to fit over a positioning pin employed as a locator during the assembly of the junction box. The positioning cylinder not only closes the holes that are in the upper and lower casing of the junction box, but also stabilizes the busbar substrates that are in the junction box and provides for a more integral and secure junction. The "metal wire rods" 106 are defined in **Kato** as "busbar 106", which is shown in Fig. 1 as being rectangular in cross-section and having a width much greater than its height.

Thus, **Kato** teaches no more than the busbar of the prior art, disclosed on page 1, lines 16-19 as follows:

The busbar is punching-molded by pressing from an electrically conductive metal plate, has a rectangular shape that is wide in its cross section, and is bent in the width direction of the metal plate upon the punching in response to a form of the circuit. At necessary positions of the busbar, a terminal part having a male tab-shape is integrally formed standing up and down.

The disadvantages of using a busbar in the conventional electric junction box of the prior art are described from page 2, line 19 to page 3, line 4 of the specification.

Thus, **Kato** fails to disclose the “electrically conductive metal wire rods having a square or nearly square shape in cross section”, as recited in claims 1 and 8 of the instant application.

Thus, the 35 USC §102(b) rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over **Kato** in vie of U.S. Patent 6,616,461 to Bellinghausen et al. (hereinafter “**Bellinghausen et al.**”).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Bellinghausen et al. has been cited for teaching a metal rod subject to “tinning” but, like **Kato**, fails to teach, mention or suggest the square or nearly square cross sectional shape recited in claim 1, from which claim 6 depends.

Thus, the 35 USC §103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over **Kato**.

Applicants respectfully traverses this rejection.

As noted above, Kato fails to teach the limitations of claim 1, from which claim 7 depends.

Thus, the 35 USC §103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner has indicated that claims 6 and 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants respectfully defer this action until a FINAL Office Action, if any, is received.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 1-12, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/606,857
Response to Office Action dated January 6, 2004

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

ARMSTRONG, KRATZ, QUINTOS,
HANSON & BROOKS, LLP



William L. Brooks
Attorney for Applicant
Reg. No. 34,129

WLB/mla

Atty. Docket No. 030780
Suite 1000
1725 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 659-2930



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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosures: Substitute Abstract of the Disclosure

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